

Impact Fellowship Policy Briefs

Today's young adult generation, now the largest segment of the workforce¹, faces stubbornly high unemployment in a 21st century labor market that increasingly requires a post-secondary credential². In New York State, 41 percent of New Yorkers have a high school diploma or less, and the young adult unemployment rate is more than double the overall state rate³. As workforce development providers work to address this skills gap with targeted programs, young adults often serve only as participants and not as thought-partners on policy development.

In partnership with JobsFirstNYC, Young Invincibles created our Impact Fellowship program to train young adults who are currently part of a workforce development program to lead projects that engage their peers and directly address policy issues in the workforce development field in New York City. The Impact Fellowship brought young adults who have participated in programs such as Per Scholas, Ladders for Leaders at United Activities Unlimited, Commercial Drivers License Certification at Cypress Hills LDC and Young Adult Internship Program at Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow to talk about how these programs impacted them, and about what issues in workforce development they thought were the most critical. The Impact Fellowship model leverages existing networks and partnership to identify where each cohort of fellows can have immediate, but lasting, impact on elevating youth voices to the workforce development field.

Over a twelve-week period, the Impact Fellows reflected on their experiences in workforce development programs and contributed to a Memo to the Field to workforce development leaders. Additionally, Impact Fellows participated in a variety of skills and strategy sessions to think through how they would advocate for increased access to quality job training, and how they could use communications and their own individual stories to amplify their policy priorities. Finally, the fellows worked in two groups doing incredibly thoughtful research around the key issues, and wrote the two policy briefs that follow to share with the field. We're incredibly proud of how much our fellows learned in just three months, and are excited to be able to share out their perspectives here.

The Impact Fellowship would not be possible without the generous funding from the Pinkerton Foundation. We also want to thank the following individuals who helped make this program what it was: Eve Rips, Tom Allison, Vincent Fang, Joyce Li, David Fisher, Leah Hebert, Kevin Douglas, Marilla Li, Andy Bowen, Wayne Ho, Betsy Plum, David Calvert, Joey Ortiz, Sarah Schultz, Kevin Stump, JT Falcone, Junior Manon.

¹ Fry, Richard. "Millennials Are the Largest Generation in the U.S. Labor Force." Pew Research Center, Pew Research Center, 11 Apr. 2018, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/04/11/millennials-largest-generation-us-labor-force/.

² "37 Percent of May 2016 Employment in Occupations Typically Requiring Postsecondary Education." U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 28 June 2017, www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2017/37-percent-of-may-2016-employment-in-occupations-typically-requiring-postsecondary-education.htm.

³ NYCLMIS analysis of BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) and Current Population Survey microdata sample, July 2015 to December 2016.

Are High Schools preparing students for post-graduation success?

Ashley Brown, Danielle Caviness, Djibril Kaba⁴

The New York City Department of Education defines college and career readiness as “Students graduating with at least a score of 75 on English Regents and 80 on a Math Regents, which correlates with success in first year college courses”.⁵ New York City’s current definition of success is still leaving some high school graduates unprepared for the journey that lies ahead. Post-Graduation success should also be measured by:

- 1) The ability to obtain and keep full or part time employment
- 2) Employment that allows for the individual to be financially stable.
- 3) A plan detailing a sustainable career pathway.

Many high schools students are not prepared to start a career or even start working when they graduate. Jobs for young adults are mostly part time-low wage labor and many students are not prepared to enter college. JobsFirstNYC state’s that in 2015, 69,234 students between the ages of 18-24 had some college but no degree⁶ even though high school graduation rates rose to a new high of 74.3 percent⁷. According to Open Data Network, in 2016 only 34.70 percent of students graduate from college in New York State, with only 8.40 percent of students earning their associate’s degree and 15.10 percent of students earning a professional degree.⁸

The Problems With The Current Definition Of Success

College Access for All is a High School program that underscores the City’s commitment to strengthening college access for all students by ensuring that all students graduate with a postsecondary plan and resources to enact that plan.⁹ Over the next two years, the city is estimated to invest \$49 million on College Access.¹⁰ This signals a commitment to the belief that College Access for All is the key to success. The issue used to be that schools couldn’t get students to go to college. Now college enrollment rates have increased, but high numbers of students are leaving college without a degree or credential. The slogan used to be “go to school, get good grades, go to college, get a good job,” but students today are finding that is no longer the case. According to Forbes¹¹, 34 percent of college graduates are underemployed meaning that they are working jobs that they are overqualified for. The underemployment rate is even higher for individuals who have graduated from college more recently, as 44 percent of college graduates, ages from 22-27, are working jobs that don’t require a college degree. Students not being ready for the life after high school affects everyone. It affects the student, their families, and New York City as a whole.

What is the change?

When there is no change in the education system to match the changing times, it’s harder for students to be prepared for the real world. It’s harder for them to get jobs and live independently. Regardless of the changing times, it is vital to make sure that young adults are consistently provided with the supports that they need in order to be successful in college and career.

⁴ Ashley Brown and Djibril Kaba attended Per Scholas, Danielle Caviness participated in the Cypress Hills LDC Commercial Driver’s License program.

⁵ <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/ronlyres/63B71DD0-CD35-43F5-AF58-7670AD4771EC/0/CollegeHandbook2015.pdf>

⁶ http://www.jobsfirstnyc.org/uploads/2018_Jobs_First_Barrirs_to_Entry_V2.pdf

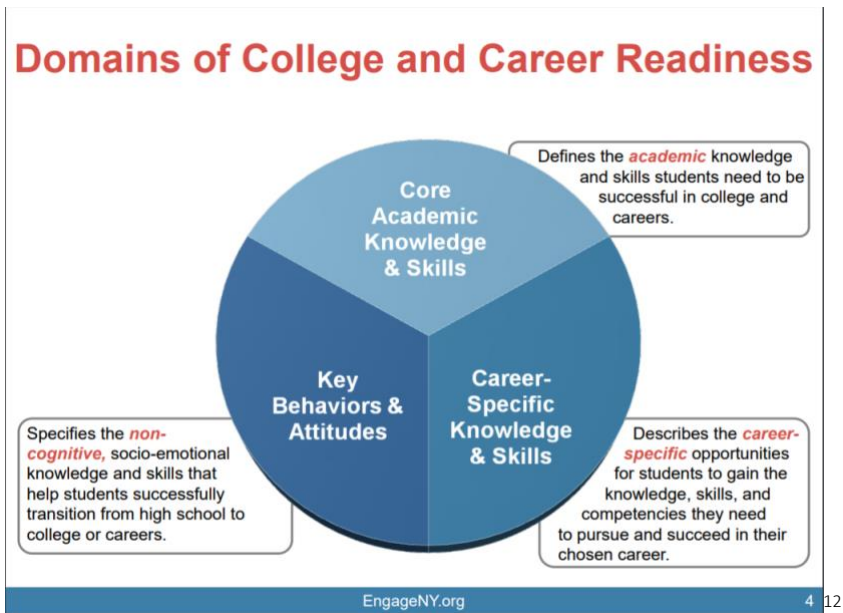
⁷ <https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2018/02/07/new-york-city-graduation-rate-hits-record-high-of-74-3-percent/>

⁸ https://www.opendatanetwork.com/entity/0400000US36/New_York/education.graduation_rates.percent_bachelors_degree_or_higher?year=2016

⁹ <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/OPSR/collegeaccesspartners.htm>

¹⁰ <http://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/equity-and-excellence-initiatives-mayor-proposes-added-funding-for-three-programs.pdf>
<https://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/every-student-succeeds-act/index.html>

¹¹ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/prestoncooper2/2017/07/13/new-york-fed-highlights-underemployment-among-college-graduates/#336b461640d8>



How does policy affect the problem?

A policy is a proposed course of action by a government, party or individual to change a situation or given set of circumstances. Policies typically become a sort of procedure or rule of law that a specific location or group has to abide by. Creating a policy can be helpful but can also be harmful. Sometimes the best solution for some isn't the best solution for all. Sectoral and generalist workforce development programs have been proven to be a key factor in increasing the likelihood of success for young adults after high school

Effective Practice

The purpose of policies aimed at helping students succeed while they are in high school should be to prepare them for the real world. In 2002 The No Child Left Behind Act¹³ provided money for extra educational assistance for poor children in return for academic progress. As part of this, students were required to take state tests in reading and math in grades 3-8 and once in high school. Many felt the problem with that program was that it wasn't preparing students for the real world and focusing only on students passing state tests so the schools would get more funding.

There are currently several policies that are geared toward the goal of assisting young adults in seeking employment and pursuing careers. Two such policies are the College for All Act and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, passed into law in 2014. The College For All act would eliminate tuition and fees at four-year public colleges and universities for families making up to \$125,000 with the intent of making community college tuition "free for all¹⁴." By investing about \$600 billion over the next decade^[19] in College For All, the government and policy makers are just doubling down on the outdated idea that college is the most effective pathway to success.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is a policy that is intended to strengthen and improve the nation's public workforce system and help get Americans, including youth and others with obstacles preventing employment, into high-quality jobs and careers and help employers hire and keep trained workers that possess the necessary skill set.¹⁵ One of the issues with this policy is that many of the individuals in this position don't know how to take advantage of or access these resources because the information isn't being provided to them. If used effectively this policy can be more successful than it already is. It is policies like these that fund post-secondary opportunity programs such as Per Scholas and Cypress Hills. With time and a more efficient distribution of information about these resources, these programs can

¹² <http://usny.nysed.gov/docs/reform-agenda-hearing-testimony-nyc.pdf>

¹³ <https://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/no-child-left-behind-overview-definition-summary.html>

¹⁴ <https://www.sanders.senate.gov/download/the-college-for-all-act-fact-sheet?id=A2524A5A-CA3F-41F8-8D93-DD10813DC384&download=1&inline=file>

¹⁵ <https://www.doleta.gov/wioa/>

fuel each other to produce higher youth employment rates. Carefully pairing workforce policy and higher ed policy together is critical to invoking change.



Effective Strategies

Funding non-degree programs are a key step to invoking the change that is needed for young adults to be successful. Programs like these they are typically separated into two categories: generalist and sectoral. Generalist training provides a range of soft skills training that sends participants into the workforce with new skills to help them obtain long term employment. The downside of this is that you are seeking a job not a career in a specialized track. Sectoral programs create a partnership between several institutional associates, training providers, workforce boards and internship organizations.

Programs like these are beneficial to participants because they acquire free training and certifications, but a common issue is that participants possess the skills but not the experience to be considered “employable” in their field. A few examples of these programs are Cypress Hills and Per Scholas. All of these programs provide some kind of training with the hopes of getting youth employed but they can cause inequities because they aren’t available to everyone they all have their deficiencies. Per Scholas provides training and certifications in the technology field for free which is extremely helpful for those who participate, but leaves others who haven’t participated in these programs in a tough spot. Cypress Hills provides training in the transportation field but they have a limited employer capacity to train and support workers. These programs are beneficial to invoking change but are limited in their capacity to serve the full range of young adults in New York who could benefit.

Policy Recommendation: Redefining Success

Former Vice President of K-12 Policy and Practice at The Education Trust, Sonija Brookens Santelises states that “too many students are leaving high school with a diploma in hand but with no clear path forward. In fact ... nearly half (47 percent) of American high school graduates complete neither a college- nor career-ready course of study”¹⁶. Although high school graduation rates in New York City are at a record high (74.3 percent in 2017)¹⁷ the path to success after high school is more difficult now. More students are graduating from high schools across the city but fewer students are leaving prepared for college or the job market. The way you learn in high school is structured to mirror a college or university education but this may not be the best method for teaching high school students to be responsible adults navigating the changing workforce. Important skills necessary for obtaining and holding a job in today’s job market are missing from the current system.

According to a Harvard business school study, 61 percent of employers report having rejected applicants with the requisite skills and experience because they did not have a college degree.¹⁸ This trend is alarming as issues such as grade inflation and the underlying cost of today’s college education cast doubt on the legitimacy of the current system of higher education. Supplementing investment in college programs with also increasing funding for programs that provide necessary technical skills at an accelerated rate can help employment rates, particularly in lower income areas of the city. At Per Scholas 85% of students graduate within fourteen weeks, and 80% of those graduates land jobs¹⁹.

With a lack of emphasis on “real world skills” young adults are leaving high school with no clear plan or understanding of the current economic market. As the labor market changes, the education system should as well in order to train now for the job skills needed in the future. Work-based learning (WBL) is the “umbrella” term used to identify activities which collaboratively engage employers and schools in providing structured learning experiences for students.²⁰ These experiences focus on assisting students in developing broad, transferable skills for postsecondary education and the workplace. A quality WBL program can make school-based learning more relevant by providing students with the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to real-world situations.

¹⁶ <http://hechingerreport.org/are-high-schools-preparing-students-to-be-college-and-career-ready/>

¹⁷ <https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/ny/2018/02/07/new-york-city-graduation-rate-hits-record-high-of-74-3-percent/>

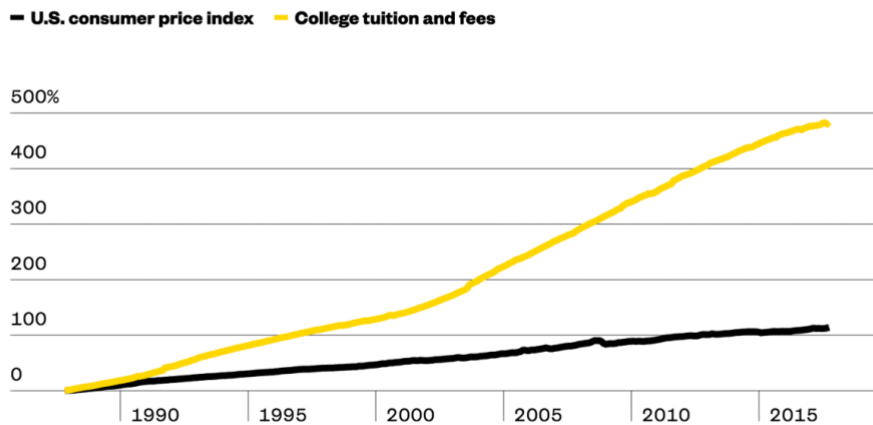
¹⁸ <https://www.hbs.edu/managing-the-future-of-work/Documents/dismissed-by-degrees.pdf>

¹⁹ <https://www.perscholas.org/about>

²⁰ <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/cte/wbl/home.html>

Across New York City an initiative is taking place to increase access to bridge programs. Bridge programs provide postsecondary technical training as well as career support and advising²¹. The jobs of today and tomorrow will require more technical and soft skills. Sectorial bridge programs exist that provide students of all ages the technical training necessary in order to jump into a specific career field at a fraction of the time and cost of going to university.

College costs have been rising fast for decades



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Upon acceptance, students at Per Scholas participate in a 15-21 week course using curriculum that is designed to be taught in a year and a half at no cost to students. This is made possible by corporate partnerships along with government funding allowing Per Scholas to provide students with the necessary skills to affordably break into the IT Field.²²

Cooperative Education is an approach that connects employers to local communities with the primary goals of increasing student engagement, providing valuable experience in a work place setting, and helping connect participants with a network to expand their career options. In addition to these goals, there are many additional benefits to cooperative education. Local education agencies throughout the state work together with employers to train students at least 14 years of age and older. These Cooperative Educational Programs mix classroom instruction with related on-the-job tasks, to help students reach their career goals. These benefits can impact students, teachers, families, communities and society by providing students with a system that is designed to help them explore various career paths seriously at an earlier age.

Some problems require several solutions. There are several programs and strategies that could be implemented in order to make sure young adult are prepared for post-secondary success after high school. Bridge programs are essential in preparing individuals for the vigorous training that these programs require to increase the chances of success. Workshops while in high school with representatives of these various programs help students to form a clearer idea of the career path they would like to pursue post-graduation. Another route is cooperative education where the students spend half the day in class and half the day in training so the student can comprehend and learn through experience if a field is something that should be further pursued or not. For these strategies to be as effective as possible, it is critical that they are run in close coordination with each other, and have the resources needed to meet real young adult need. New York should make it a priority to make sure those students who are ready to head out into the real world knows about the options available so they can make an informed decision about the direction of their future.

²¹ <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/careerpathways/strategy/nyc-bridge-bank.page>

²² <https://www.perscholas.org/about>

Introduction

Most young adults go through the public school systems that vary in quality, struggle with work experience, and fight back against the current negative sentiments towards millennials. However, DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipients fight to find their place in communities in this country that often don't treat them equally as they work towards permanent residency. Furthermore, DACA recipients, a subset of the broader population of undocumented young people in the US know as Dreamers, are left to combat the difficulty of high college tuition without government financial aid or work-study jobs that their permanent resident or citizen peers qualify for. This in return leads to low college attendance for this population, and keeps a large percent of DACA recipients in poverty. Now more than ever, Dreamers are in need of a way to fund their college education for a brighter future. New York City, which has been a sanctuary city since 2016, should have programs for Dreamers so they can pay for their college, and receive valuable work experience.²⁴

Background

Under the current presidential administration, there has been a lot of doubt about the future of Dreamers. The DREAM Act would provide undocumented youth with the ability to work and pursue education without the fear of deportation as they abide by the law. However, with a Congressional stalemate on the issue, the termination of DACA and no clear indication that it will be upheld, many of these young people turning to local government for support. With President Donald Trump looking to fund and expand Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to three times its size under his "10-point immigration plan,"²⁵ it is clear that the current administration is not on the side of young undocumented immigrants, even as the majority of people don't share his perspective. In recent polls, CBS found 87 percent of people in the United States support DACA²⁶, and Fox News found that 83 percent of citizens support immigration reform.²⁷ This suggests the majority of people want change for those who are undocumented. So why is it that there isn't enough support for Dreamers in New York State and New York City?

Local and state governments have the ability and power to provide driver's licenses or other identification cards, like the NYC ID, and tuition assistance for those who are undocumented. However in New York, elected officials have not been as quick to help these individuals. In the past, the state has taken some steps to help these individuals: Governor Andrew Cuomo has preserved access to Medicaid for DACA recipients,²⁸ and indicated interested in allowing undocumented students to access the Excelsior Scholarship,²⁹ but the State Senate has voted no to the New York State DREAM Act for the past five years, which would provide tuition assistance to Dreamers.

Twenty states offer in-state tuition to unauthorized immigrant students, 16 by state legislative action and four by state university systems. New York is one of those 16 states. However, only five states allow undocumented students -- including DACA recipients -- to receive state financial aid: California, New Mexico, Texas, Minnesota, and Washington.³⁰ Despite having one of the highest populations of DACA recipients, New York only offers limited aid to undocumented immigrants³¹. The City University of New York (CUNY) and certain non-profit organizations do offer scholarships for the NY-based DACA students, these scholarships are limited, while there are thousands of Dreamers in NYC and New York state.³² Thus, these young adults were brought to the United States by their parents in the hopes of securing a brighter future, yet they are being denied full access to the very higher education they were meant to pursue.

²³ Leonel Brito and Murshedur Shahyd participated in the Ladders for Leaders program at United Activities Unlimited and Jesus Marshall participated in the Young Adult Internship Program at Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow.

²⁴ nypost.com/2016/11/19/new-york-to-remain-a-sanctuary-city-for-immigrants-de-blasio

²⁵ www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/promises/trumpometer/promise/1440/triple-ice-enforcement/.

²⁶ <http://www.langerresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/1194a2TrumpsFirstYear.pdf>

²⁷ www.foxnews.com/politics/2017/09/28/fox-news-poll-83-percent-support-pathway-to-citizenship-for-illegal-immigrants.html

²⁸ <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-ensures-medicaid-coverage-daca-recipients-regardless-federal-action>

²⁹ <https://nypost.com/2018/01/24/cuomo-wants-to-let-dreamers-go-to-college-for-free/>

³⁰ <http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/undocumented-student-tuition-overview.aspx>

³¹ <http://www2.cuny.edu/financial-aid/student-eligibility/non-citizen-eligibility>

³² These scholarships included The Dream US Scholarship, LULF, CUNY BECAS Scholarship and College Greenlight.

Research

As of February 2018, there are 11.3 million undocumented people living in the United States.³³ To be undocumented means that individuals came into the country without permission to enter and in most circumstances cannot legally work. This leaves undocumented people at risk of deportation because it is considered a crime to come here illegally. Of these 11.3 million, 3.6 million are estimated to have arrived before their 18th birthday, meaning they arrived in the United States before being considered an adult.³⁴ The guidelines to qualify for a DACA permit are for 16-year-olds who arrived before 2007, and they have to have graduated from high school or completed their high school equivalency at the time of their application. There are 1.8 million young people who entered the United States before their 16th birthday, but due to the 2007 cutoff date and educational requirements, do not qualify to receive DACA protections.³⁵

How many are qualified under DACA?

There are around 800,000 DACA recipients who are part of the program that President Barack Obama initiated.³⁶ About 41,000 of those recipients are based in the state of New York, with about 75 percent of those individuals residing in NYC.³⁷

What are the challenges for Dreamers in New York City?

In New York City, the poverty rate for DACA recipients is high, as is the unemployment rate for younger Dreamers. In looking at data on DACA recipients in New York, it's important to keep in mind not all numbers are available for all of New York City: some statistics are borough-specific and are therefore only available for Brooklyn, Bronx, and Queens. Also, all data and numbers are estimates from different NYC government sources and conversations with the New York Immigration Coalition, so the number of DACA recipients reported may be under-represented.

- In **Brooklyn**, there are an estimated 15,000 immediate DACA recipients, meaning that they have met all the requirements to work and are of age. An additional 6,000 young adults are in the process, meaning they are not 15 yet. Of the 15,000 DACA recipients, almost a third are in poverty. Roughly 4,000 are in college, and 4,000 are in high school.
- In **Queens**, there are an estimated 22,000 immediate DACA recipients who are of age and have met the educational requirements. Of these, 9,000 are employed, and about half live in poverty. Furthermore in Queens, around 5,000 are enrolled in college, while 6,000 are in high school. As for younger children would be eligible for DACA in the future, there are around 7,000 total young adults, and about 3,000 live in poverty.
- In the **Bronx**, there are an estimated 8,000 individual immediately eligible for DACA. Of these 8,000, an estimated 3,000 are in poverty, and 4,000 are employed. The numbers for how many are in college is not documented, though it is estimated that about 2,000 are in high school. The estimated number for those who qualify for DACA in the future is 4,000, with 2,000 of these children in poverty.

With these numbers found by the New York Immigration Coalition, it is clear that DACA recipients have high rates of poverty and unemployment in NYC.

A large portion of these DACA recipients are in college or in high school. As the financial burden of college continues to rise, these students cannot receive any financial aid – which is particularly challenging given how many of them are living in poverty and may not have the financial resources to fund their college education. Recently, the Excelsior Scholarship was passed in New York State, but DACA recipients cannot access this program, although the state is considering legislation that would allow DACA recipients to qualify.³⁸ The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) is also not available to DACA recipients. When we interviewed three DACA recipients in Staten Island, they all said that the most difficult aspect

³³ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2018/02/13/who-daca-dreamers-and-how-many-here/333045002/>

³⁴ (<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2018/02/13/who-daca-dreamers-and-how-many-here/333045002/>)

³⁵ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2018/02/13/who-daca-dreamers-and-how-many-here/333045002>

³⁶ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2018/02/13/who-daca-dreamers-and-how-many-here/333045002/>

³⁷ <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-sends-letter-president-trump-we-stand-ready-defend-new-yorks-dreamers;>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/06/nyregion/new-york-today-daca-and-new-yorkers.html>

³⁸ <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2017/s7420>

of going to college as an undocumented student was the financial burden. While most people receive the aid they need to attend CUNY or SUNY, DACA recipients must work to pay for their tuition in the summer and even during the semesters. When asked “how could the New York City government help DACA recipients that want to go to college?”, one Dreamer said, “An internship that pays for college, and that offers networking abilities to possible entry-level job openings.” He also further elaborated that while his father pays for his tuition, he is only enrolled in four classes, instead of the recommended five, so he has time to work. Another DACA recipient in high school said that the most difficult thing about choosing a college is finding one that is affordable, and will accept the scholarships he has earned. He stated, “Being a DACA recipient is great, but it also has its downsides. For example, not being able to receive a single dollar of financial aid for college is a very difficult aspect. No matter how large the financial need is, the government does not budge with any bit.”

Why the NYC government should help DACA recipients

In 2017, the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs researched and documented the benefits of Dreamers to the NYC economy³⁹. The data collected by the report shows that:

- Last year, DACA recipients contributed an estimated \$4.7 billion dollars in city gross domestic product.
- There are an estimated 75,000 DACA recipients and DACA-eligible New Yorkers, and 30,000 of these are already enrolled in the program.
- An estimated 10,000 are home owners or have a mortgage in New York City.

These numbers show the contributions DACA recipients make to the city’s economy, despite the lack of their family members having legal work status. Many DACA recipients reside with family members who are not citizens, and therefore must help their families, while some even go to high school or college while working multiple jobs as well. On the federal level, a path from DACA to U.S. citizenship is currently being discussed. If that were to go through, that would give DACA recipients the ability to vote. If New York City and State were to help these individuals now, Dreamers will remember those who helped them in the long run.

Current Status

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a memorandum rescinding the DACA program on Sept. 5, 2017.⁴⁰ The program was to be phased out over six months, ending on March 5, 2018. However, on Jan. 9, 2018, a U.S. district judge ordered that DACA recipients be allowed to continue submitting renewal applications, excluding new applicants who have become qualified to apply since September.⁴¹ In addition, pending applications will be adjudicated on a case-by-case basis. Deferred action status and employment authorization documents will continue to be valid for two years from date of issuance.

Future Solutions:

Attending to college or trade schools in New York can be expensive. For Dreamers in New York, it is even more difficult to pay for college, as they are ineligible for financial aid as well as work-study. Overall, expanding DACA recipients’ eligibility for programs like Pell, TAP, and Excelsior is critical.

At a city level, New York could help undocumented immigrants work at a job that provides them valuable work experience and a way to pay for college. This program could be similar to a fellowship that provides students with real-world work experience to help pay for school. The program would in effect function as a city-level answer to work-study programs, helping fill in the gap where federal work-study programs fall short. This program would be the most beneficial if offered at CUNY institutions, since the vast majority of NYC DACA recipients attend CUNY. At the end of the day, ensuring that DACA recipients in New York City can both attend school and leave with real-world work experience would be a big leap in the right direction.

39 <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/immigrants/about/press-releases/01-18-2018.page>

40 <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2017/09/05/memorandum-rescission-daca>

41 <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/09/us/trump-daca-improper.html>

MEMO

To: Workforce Development Providers

From: Participants in the Impact Fellowship Program

Date: 4/24/18

Subject: Memo to the Field on Workforce Development Programs

In partnership with JobsFirstNYC, Young Invincibles created our Impact Fellowship program to train young adults who are currently part of a workforce development program to lead projects that engage their peers and directly address policy issues in the workforce development field in New York City. One piece of the 12 week program was to have a candid discussion around best practices in programs, ways programs could be improved, and overall feedback around the programs they participated in. This discussion was put into this Memo to the Field to help inform young adult workforce programs.

I. Program Overview

The purpose of the Impact Fellowship was to give young adults the opportunity and tools to become experts and effective advocates on workforce development issues. Over a twelve-week period, six Impact Fellows participated in a variety of skills and strategy sessions to think through how they would advocate for increased access to quality job training, and how they could use communications and their own individual stories to amplify their policy priorities.

Impact Fellows participated in a variety of sectoral and generalist programs offered throughout New York City and were elected by their program providers to participate in the Impact Fellowship to reflect on their experiences, learn about the policies that impact workforce development, and learn how to advocate for issues that matter to them. Participants came from programs offered by United Activities United, Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow, Cypress Hills LDC, and Per Scholas.

The programs that the fellows participated in included:

Ladders for Leaders

Ladders for Leaders is a nationally recognized program that offers high school and college students the opportunity to participate in paid professional summer internships with leading corporations, non-profit organizations, and government agencies in New York City. The program is an initiative of the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) and supported by the NYC Center for Youth Employment and the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City.

Ladders for Leaders gives students a unique opportunity to explore their interests and discover new ones through:

- Pre-employment Training: Participants receive help with résumé and cover letter writing, and interviewing skills. They also learn essential workplace readiness skills and business etiquette.
- Paid Summer Internships: Paid internship opportunities are available in a variety of industries to accommodate student interests.
- Opportunity to join a growing alumni network: Ladders for Leaders has a broad network of alumni, post-internship opportunities, and networking events open only to past participants of the program.

YAIP-Young Adult Internship Program

YAIP provides placement into short-term internship opportunities for job-ready 16-24 year-old young adults who are not working and not in school. Funded through the Mayor's Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO), the program offers 14 weeks of paid orientation, training, and work, followed by nine months of follow-up services and assistance for placement in permanent jobs, training programs, and educational opportunities. YAIP programs are located in community-based

organizations in all five boroughs of New York City, and offer a range of placements in many industries, including construction, hospitality, health care, and retail.

CHAMPION Network

The CHAMPION Network is a career opportunity for young adults between the ages of 17-24, out of work and school, who live in one of the five boroughs and who are able to commit to the program's requirements. Individuals complete a four-week core training in their choice of one of three areas: ServSafe® Food Handlers Certification, Microsoft Office, or Commercial Driver's License. The program also provides support on basic academic skills and provides access to a mentor. Young adults also have access to one of the following over the course of the year:

- Scholarship for advanced training at CUNY, approximate value \$3,000
- Paid internship, 150 hours/\$9/hr.
- Free High School Equivalency degree classes
- Direct job placement
- College counseling
- Help starting your own business

Participants have the opportunity to earn up to an \$150 incentive bonus for work and school supplies.

Per Scholas - IT Support

IT Support offers CompTIA A+, Security+, CCNA, and Coding and Network+ certifications, and equips individuals with the knowledge to fill a wide range of entry-level technology jobs as a support technician. The program runs for 15 weeks, Monday-Friday, from 9:00-4:00. Programs don't require any prior IT experience. The program is offered at no cost to the student. The program includes hands-on instruction that thoroughly covers core competencies in IT support, along with customer service training to support end users with technical help. Additionally, individuals receive professional coaching to prepare for their job search, interviews, and career advancement, and receive job placement assistance with access to an employer network of 200+ companies. Eighty percent of graduates land jobs.

II. Recommendations and Reflections

During the Impact Fellowship program, the fellows were asked to reflect on their programs and to address the following questions:

- What did you love about your program?
- What about your program could have been different?
- What would you like to see in future workforce development programs?

After this discussion, fellows had two weeks to try and connect with other program participants they knew and collect their feedback to be incorporated into this memo. Participants identified improvements to recruitment and eligibility, bringing new best practices to program execution, deepening provider support, and minimizing opportunity costs for participants as key themes.

Recruitment and Eligibility

The way a program recruits is critical not only to getting young adults to participate in the program, but also to making sure they know what program is offering.

- Programs need to make sure to recruit where the target population tends to be. For example, if a program is targeting 16-24 year olds, it should be posted in high schools and not middle schools. Recruitment could also focus on community centers or parks that young adults frequent.
- During the recruitment process, programs should share the intention behind different screening processes to show how the screening process supports the program's goal. For example, several program participants had to take personality tests, and it was not made clear to them how it related to the program they were going to participate in.

- In recruitment and outreach materials, programs should make sure the expectations are clear. It's important for participants to know what the expectations for any program are, including time commitment, attendance policies, and outcomes. Several of the participants cited that these were initially unclear at the start of the program.
- Programs should reconsider eligibility requirements that include not working while you are in the program. Many young adults are taking care of families or have other financial commitments, and find it difficult not to work for several weeks.

Program Execution

There are many different workforce development programs in New York City, each of which has its own set of program structures and activities. Some overall best practices that participants highlighted include openness on the part of program leaders to feedback, and giving participants some space to make mistakes. Participants appreciated when the instructors had industry experience, and when the programs provided a laid-back, friendly environment that encouraged participants to ask for assistance. While these recommendations are not inclusive of every program that exists, Impact Fellows recommended that:

- Programs should look at their curriculum and how it is executed by different instructors to make sure participants receive equally beneficial guidance that doesn't vary based on the instructor they're paired with.
- Programs should share information about their matching process with young adults, while gathering more information from the participants to create strong, mutually beneficial matches.
- For programs that are place-based and offer trainings, Impact Fellows felt it was particularly important to think through ways to increase access to the programs by reassessing geographic matching.
- Attendance policies are important, and participants felt that serious attendance policies, clearly conveyed to participants, were helpful in ensuring that young adults took the programs seriously.

Provider Support

While young adults are introduced to providers through specific programs, participants also look to the providers for additional supports, and have found the following helpful:

- Flexibility of program staff in scheduling follow up meetings or one-on-one's.
- Providing networking opportunities with adult professionals and other young adults.
- Continuous follow up on progress throughout the program, as well as after program completion.
- Finding the best way to communicate with participants by asking directly about their preferences.
- Giving general feedback, and providing one-on-one support when requested.
- Providing additional career coaching and technical instruction to continue to support post-secondary success.

Opportunity Cost

All of the Impact Fellows agreed that these programs were beneficial, give access to opportunities many wouldn't normally have, and in some cases were life changing. However, many participants flagged concerns about opportunity costs associated with participating in these programs, and stressed that workforce development programs should offer resources and incentives to make it possible for more young adults to participate. Participants specifically raised the following suggestions:

- Classes and training would be easier to attend if transportation were covered.
- Programs that provide Metro cards, food, or other incentives attract young adults and support consistent attendance.
- Some participants felt programs would be easier to participate in if they were offered in shorter time periods.